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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [UNSC](#) [EG](#) [SU](#) [LE](#)  
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ON DARFUR, UN REFORM,  
MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD, NDI/IRI, PEACE CORPS

REF: STATE 78589

Classified by Ambassador Francis Ricciardone for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

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Summary  
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¶1. (C) During a May 18 meeting requested by the Ambassador, Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit offered his views on next steps in Darfur, UN reform, and countering the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Aboul Gheit said Egypt was in touch with Khartoum to urge its cooperation to resolve international concerns on Darfur, and was prepared to send as many Egyptian troops and monitors as the African Union would allow. Egypt "could put 300 more men into Darfur in two months," if the AU would indicate its acceptance. He said Egypt had invited Mini Mennawi to Cairo, and would treat dozens of Minawi's wounded troops in Egyptian hospitals. On UN reform, Aboul Gheit dodged a substantive discussion on management reform, choosing instead to attack what he called USG efforts to silence debate on the Palestinian issue in the UN. Similarly, when the Ambassador pressed on domestic issues including Ayman Nour and police repression of demonstrations, Aboul Gheit cited Muslim Brotherhood (MB) plotting as the root cause of current domestic political problems in Egypt, and sternly warned the U.S. not to interfere. Describing his upcoming travel to China, ongoing efforts to conclude a framework agreement with the Europeans, and dismissing the ongoing debate over U.S. assistance, Aboul Gheit half-jokingly told the Ambassador Egypt was "looking toward its new friends, even as we value our traditional friends." Aboul Gheit said he would favor approving standing NDI/IRI requests to legalize their status in Egypt, and reiterated his interest in Senator Dodd's recent proposal to invite Peace Corps volunteers to Egypt. End summary.

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Where Next on Darfur?  
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¶2. (C) Just back from a marathon tour that included stops in New York, Germany, Italy, Morocco, Singapore, Malaysia, and Japan, an exhausted Aboul Gheit agreed to meet the Ambassador May 18, for a general review of bilateral and regional issues prior to the World Economic Forum in Sharm El Sheikh and the Ambassador's upcoming Washington consultations. Starting with Darfur, the Ambassador drew from reftel demarche in calling for GOE support for Darfur rebel leader Mini Mennawi and the implementation of the recently-signed Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). Also crucial would be: Egyptian contributions to Darfur reconstruction assistance, a Darfur-Darfur Dialogue, pressure on Darfur rebels to sign the

DPA, support for the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), support for an eventual UN peace-keeping operation there, and upholding UN sanctions on the four named Sudanese in UNSCR 1672.

13. (C) Responding, Aboul Gheit said he had recently sent several letters to his Sudanese counterpart Lam Akol, to counsel the GOS against taking additional unhelpful public positions on Darfur that would "box them in" politically. Aboul Gheit wondered aloud "what the GOS was doing," as he accused its leaders of "not understanding the (international) dynamics" of the Darfur crisis. Aboul Gheit volunteered that Egypt had invited Darfur rebel leader Mini Mennawi to Cairo for talks, and would treat several dozen of his wounded troops (currently in Chad) in Egyptian hospitals. On GOE support to AMIS, Aboul Gheit said Egypt had already supplied the AU with 34 army officers and 50 civilian police monitors. Egypt, he said, had offered "as many personnel as the AU could handle," but accused the AU of being "lazy" in its response to the offer. Aboul Gheit asked that the USG communicate with the AU Secretariat to get a statement that the AU would welcome (even a USG letter on the AU's views) additional GOE troop contributions to AMIS. Asked about GOE support for a UN PKO in Darfur, Aboul Gheit said Egypt was willing to consider an offer, but only after the GOS provided its consent. Aboul Gheit affirmed that the GOE would "of course" uphold UNSCR 1672 sanctions against the Sudanese.

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Pressing Egypt on UN Reform  
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14. (C) The Ambassador told Aboul Gheit that Washington was focused on ensuring effective reforms at the United Nations, to answer the call of world leaders last September to fix the institution and ensure it functioned more effectively. To this end, the recent vote at the UN to forestall reforms was troubling, and required strong leadership to overcome differences before the funding mandate expires in June. Egypt, as an influential actor in this debate, needs to be more helpful in answering SYG Annan's proposals for reform, including in such areas as review of mandates, Secretariat reform, etc., the Ambassador said. Seizing on the issue of mandate reform, Aboul Gheit accused the U.S. of trying to stifle debate on Palestine within the UN via its reform efforts.

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Muslim Brotherhood Looking to Exploit Tensions  
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15. (C) The Ambassador informed Aboul Gheit of his upcoming consultations in Washington. He noted that there would be high interest in the course of political reforms, but only bad news was coming out of Egypt on this score since late 2005: Ayman Nour, local elections postponement, extension of the emergency law, police brutality against peaceful protestors, cases against judges, etc. Aboul Gheit was dismissive.

16. (C) Citing his recent trip to Singapore and Malaysia, Aboul Gheit noted his observation of a large and expanding number of "covered women and bearded men" in those countries and beyond. We don't want "the beards" in power here, he said, and chided the U.S. for aiding the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in its quest for political power in Egypt. The U.S., he further accused, did not understand the region but still insists on interfering. "You made a large blunder in Bahrain during last year's BMENA meeting," he said, when "one of your delegation members thought that Egypt could be brushed aside. The result is the tension and disruptions that we are experiencing now. The issue boils down to the Muslim Brotherhood and their belief that they can make us fall on our faces. That won't happen," Aboul Gheit said emphatically. The MB is now supporting the judges, but "would support the street sweepers" if that helped them accrue more power, he said. MB parliamentarians in their

recent debates were focusing on Iran's attempts to pursue nuclear weapons and want Egypt to do the same. The U.S. must understand that Egypt will not go the way of Iran or Algeria - "we will resist and we will win." Nor can the U.S. afford to have an Iran in Egypt, he said conclusively.

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International Republican/Democratic Institutes  
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¶17. (C) The Ambassador noted his understanding that a decision by the Minister was expected shortly on the subject of permitting U.S. organizations the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) to operate legally and above board in Egypt. Aboul Gheit instructed his staff to check into the status of the request. He indicated that he favored approving the request as "such organizations are no threat to Egypt," but pointed to a recent decision by the Government of Bahrain to refuse permission for the NDI to operate there.

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Peace Corps for Egypt?  
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¶18. (SBU) Aboul Gheit recalled that last month, Senator Dodd had asked whether Egypt might welcome Peace Corps volunteers. Aboul Gheit reminded the Ambassador that he had welcomed the idea, and was awaiting the further information on the Peace Corps program which the Senator had promised to send. Aboul Gheit said he remained positively interested in the idea, though "only male PCVs could serve in Upper Egypt." Action request: please communicate Aboul Gheit's interest to Senator Dodd and Peace Corps HQ. End action request.

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Egypt's New Friends  
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¶19. (C) Responding to the Ambassador's comment that he would be discussing USG military and economic assistance to Egypt with Members of Congress at the WEF this weekend and on Capitol Hill next month, Aboul Gheit stated that he was "bored" of this topic and would no longer discuss it. Nevertheless, he added that he would soon travel to China for an upcoming Arab-China summit meeting, and that Egypt was almost finished negotiating a "great, great" framework agreement which would cover the relationship between Cairo

and the European Union. While Egypt would be working with its "new friends," he continued, Egypt would continue to value its relations with its "classic, conventional" friend the United States. The Ambassador commended Egypt for attempting to open up further to the world, and hoped it could open up further at home, as well. (Comment: We understand that President Mubarak ordered agencies to cease discussion with U.S. officials on the assistance package, out of resentment at USG linkages of aid to domestic reforms that Egypt insists it will pursue at its own pace. End comment.)  
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